



Stephen Hoffman

From: ecomment@pa.gov
Sent: Monday, January 4, 2021 5:14 PM
To: Environment-Committee@pasenate.com; IRRRC; environmentalcommittee@pahouse.net; regcomments@pa.gov; ntroutman@pasen.gov; timothy.collins@pasenate.com; gking@pahousegop.com; siversen@pahouse.net
Cc: c-jflanaga@pa.gov
Subject: Comment received - Proposed Rulemaking: CO2 Budget Trading Program (#7-559)

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The enclosed comment was received as part of the following testimony:

Testimony name: Public Hearing 10 (6pm) - #7-559
Testimony date: 12/14/2020 12:00:00 AM
Testimony location: WebEx

Re: eComment System

The Department of Environmental Protection has received the following comments on Proposed Rulemaking: CO2 Budget Trading Program (#7-559).

Commenter Information:

Stephanie Ulmer
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Comments entered:

Pennsylvania needs to accept the reality of climate change and join The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

Although coal is quickly being displaced by natural gas in electrical generation in our state, coal still makes up about 17% of Pennsylvania's electricity portfolio and the mining and burning of coal still results in a significant release of carbon dioxide pollution.

And, in actuality, replacing coal with natural gas to generate electricity does little to reduce Pennsylvania's over all greenhouse gas emissions. Even if we set aside methane emissions and focus solely on carbon dioxide, as RGGI does, and even though natural gas electricity generation produces about half as much carbon dioxide pollution as coal fired generation does, the simple fact is, producing and burning natural gas does not produce zero CO2 emissions.

If our power grids continue to rely heavily on natural gas, carbon emissions alone will still be too high by mid-century to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees celsius. Pennsylvania needs to switch to renewables ASAP. Joining RGGI will help us make that switch by putting a price on carbon emissions.

Although adopting RGGI should only be part of Pennsylvania's response to our changing climate, it would be an important one. It would, by the DEP's own estimates, decrease PA's carbon pollution by 25% by 2030, not enough of course, but enough to make serious progress in our quest to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a timely fashion.

RGGI has yielded a net economic benefit to those states who already participate of almost \$5 billion dollars in less than a decade. Close to \$6 billion dollars have been saved in these same states as a result of increased public health as their air quality improves. In other words, adopting RGGI has brought to the collective coffers of its member states about \$1 billion a year.

Meanwhile, according to EarthTrak, Pennsylvania spends almost \$3 billion a year subsidizing fossil fuels and related industries, industries which degrade and fragment our wildlife habitat, poison our soils, and pollute our water and air. And it is the Pennsylvania taxpayer who shoulders the costs for repairing the damage to our environment (when that is even possible), and caring for an increasingly sickened population. Joining RGGI will help us transition to renewables by putting a price on carbon emissions.

Pennsylvania is the 4th largest emitter of carbon dioxide pollution in the country. We know what the repercussions of continuing PA's wholehearted embrace of petrochemicals, oil, gas, and coal are. We will experience more frequent and intense storms with heavier downpours. In between, we will have more prolonged droughts. We will have increasingly early springs that are often followed by killing frosts later in the season. Our summers will be hotter, making outdoor work more dangerous. Human and animal populations will become sicker. We are seeing these changes already.

What will happen to our food supply in this scenario? Where will we turn for clean, drinkable water? What about the cost of flooding and landslides to our roadways and other transportation networks? How will our power lines, natural gas and other fossil fuel infrastructure even hold up under the stress of storms and unstable ground?

There are many sensible and doable solutions out there to address climate change. RGGI is one of them. It will help to move us away from our dependence on fossil fuels while at the same time providing funds that can be used to address the plight of workers and small businesses reliant on these industries for their paychecks as well as those communities who have borne the brunt of fossil fuel pollution. There is no time to waste.

No attachments were included as part of this comment.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Jessica Shirley

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